

Applicant Name Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
Project Name Landusky Mine

Project Abstract

Pegasus Gold Corporation (PGC) conducted open pit mining at the Landusky Mine between 1979 and 1996. PGC declared bankruptcy in 1998, and DEQ now operates water treatment systems at the site, using funds from short-term water treatment bonds. Significant deterioration of water quality in Swift Gulch was first noted in 1999. Because impaired water quality in Swift Gulch became evident after the bankruptcy of PGC, no reclamation or water treatment bonds had been established to address conditions in that drainage.

The DEQ and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) modified mine reclamation plans to improve water quality in Swift Gulch. Despite efforts to that end, no improvements have been observed. Additional studies are needed to better characterize groundwater flow systems adjacent to Swift Gulch to determine the best course for further remedial actions.

The goal of this project is to improve water quality in Swift Gulch. The objective is to characterize groundwater flow in the vicinity of Swift Gulch and the adjacent Landusky pit complex so that the relative effectiveness of various remedial options can be accurately assessed and appropriate actions can then be implemented.

The DEQ, in cooperation with the BLM, is responsible for implementing the reclamation program at the Landusky Mine. Subsequent to closure of the bankruptcy case, in June 2004, the BLM placed the mine sites under its Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) authority via an Action Memorandum. The action allows the BLM to continue to direct remedial activities at the sites despite the absence of an operator. The BLM is preparing an Engineering Evaluation/Cost Assessment (EE/CA) addressing long-term site management options. It is anticipated that the Draft EE/CA will be published in June 2006.

The Landusky Mine is 50 miles southwest of Malta, adjacent to the southern boundary of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation. The Landusky Mine is in Sections 14, 15, 22, and 23, Township 25 North, Range 24 East, Phillips County. The Swift Gulch study area is in Sections 10, 11, 14, and 15 of Township 25 North, Range 24 East.

This project would take approximately 24 months.